

Opening Statement
The Honorable Doc Hastings
Ranking Member
House Natural Resources Committee
Before the
House National Parks, Forest and Public Lands Subcommittee
Oversight Hearing on
H.R. 644 the *Grand Canyon Watersheds Protection Act of 2009*
July 21, 2009

Thank you, Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Bishop. We're here today to discuss legislation that would permanently remove a million acres of land in Arizona from the development of uranium resources.

While I strongly oppose this bill, I want to focus this morning on the troubling and unacceptable actions recently taken by the Obama Administration on this issue.

Yesterday, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced a two year "time-out" on new uranium mining on this land in Arizona. This decision, which would lock up 40 percent of our country's uranium supply, will cost American jobs at a time when unemployment is at 9.5 percent, a 26-year high, and make the United States more dependent on foreign countries for energy. In the end, this decision will move our economy backwards, not forwards.

Once again, this is another example of the Obama Administration saying no to American energy and no to American jobs.

In just six short months, the Administration has blocked new offshore drilling, blocked oil and natural gas leases in Utah, and is now blocking uranium mining in Arizona.

It's ironic that the same Administration that is pushing through a National Energy Tax in order to reduce our country's carbon footprint is now blocking the mining of uranium that is used to generate nuclear power. Nuclear is a clean, non-carbon emitting energy source. If the President is serious about reducing carbon emissions, he would support increased American uranium development and embrace nuclear energy to help meet our growing energy needs.

We must enact an all-of-the-above energy plan that responsibly uses our natural resources and makes our environment cleaner. This includes the development of renewable, carbon-free energy sources such as nuclear, wind, solar and hydropower, while also producing more American-made oil and natural gas.

Unfortunately, this Administration has chosen to adopt a high-priced gourmet energy plan that only uses certain types of American energy – and focuses almost solely on green jobs.

We can all support the creation of green jobs and how they can contribute to our economic future. However, the 14.7 million Americans who are unemployed aren't just looking for green jobs. They need green jobs, nuclear jobs, drilling jobs, oil and gas jobs, manufacturing jobs and the thousands of jobs that depend on uranium development.

What's even more troubling about yesterday's announcement is that the Administration made this unilateral decision without consulting with Congress, and without providing answers to detailed questions asked by House Republicans in a letter sent to Secretary Salazar last March.

And we'll have to keep waiting for answers to those questions because not one single official from the Administration is here today to testify.

It is outrageous that while the Administration is single-handedly making decisions that will cost jobs and block energy development, they are not even here to EXPLAIN their actions and provide us with more detailed information.

For an Administration that promised to be open and transparent, I am deeply troubled by their actions yesterday and their absence today – and hope this isn't foreshadowing their arbitrary and heavy-handed approach to crafting our national energy policy.

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